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ART NEEDLEWORK

WATERING-PLACE NEEDLEWORK.



ALMOST every woman has demonstrated to her own satisfaction that the only way to enjoy leisure is not to be idle. Each watering-place piazza illustrates the apparent paradox with its knot of busy workers. Artistically there are few prettier sights than these groups of airily dressed women, the delicacy of their summer draperies set off by the bright knots of silks and wools, and their arms, half bared, or shining through the thin mists of muslin, cutting the air in graceful curves as they draw their needles to

and fro. From every point of view it becomes desirable to consider the sort of work appropriate to the peculiar form which industry takes during the watering-place season. In this matter locality becomes a question of some importance. At Saratoga one would not do the same sort of work as at Newport. At the spa the days are apt to be languid, and the sun to beat down with greater force than at the seaside, where its rays are tempered by the moisture and the winds fresh from the ocean. At Saratoga the work-basket is fitted for lighter pieces, linen canvases, Java, and Japanese stuffs, which add but little extra weight and are not injured by moist fingers. At the seaside, on the contrary, and in the higher altitudes of the mountains, velvets and plushes, silks and satins, become no burden. These are broad distinctions, but they will be confirmed by every one's experience.

Having premised so much, some suggestions applicable to different degrees of latitude and longitude may be gathered from the stores of the different art needlework establishments. The most popular needlework for the summer, chosen because it furnishes a pastime without demanding much thought on the part of the worker, consists of those designs which require only to be filled in. Something has been said in *THE ART AMATEUR* with reference to the different methods of filling in, but two other ways may be noticed here. One is by long stitches of filoselle, often covering six inches of the canvas. There is, for example, a wide strip with a design down the centre of flowers in antique colors. The vacant canvas is then filled in with faint pink, almost white, filoselle in straight lines from the outer edges to the design. Where this distance is too long the stitches are taken outward from the design midway and then taken up again to the outer edge. This makes a desirable break in the surface. Another time the distance will be changed, making the line of the stitches nearer the design or the edge. This is a sort of adaptation of a method used by the Japanese, and has a very agreeable effect.

A second method of filling in is used between stripes. As an instance, take two stripes introducing flowers in single stitch done with crewel, and between the stripes use yellow floss silk. Take a stitch crosswise covering

two meshes; then proceed obliquely for three stitches and take two stitches crosswise again; thence obliquely down again on a line with the commencement and take two crosswise stitches again, repeating the same course. The stitches thus taken will describe more nearly than anything else saw teeth with the points cut off and corners broadened, and the difference of direction given to the stitches in the glistening silk makes a very pretty play of light over the surface.

It is surprising what beautiful effects can be obtained by cutting out the figures in India cashmeres, and even in those cheaper fabrics known as Tycoon reps, or out of the common delaines of the same designs and coloring. A sofa pillow of dark wine-red plush, in illustration, has designs of this sort cut out and applied to the four corners with a smaller design in the centre. These are all overrun at the edges and have the principal outlines traced with gold braid, such as is now so lavishly used in embroidery. This braid is often mixed with color, in which case the effect is even richer, though it demands of the worker scarcely anything beyond application.

Of this sort of work an example that deserves description is a square of black satin. On this is applied an artistic group of flowers in fresh bright colors cut out of a piece of French cretonne. This in the same way is fastened down with tinsel braid and has its shading and coloring brought out with silks of the same shade. The work is lightly done in long Kensington stitch,

There is another form of linen canvas which is checked and somewhat heavier in quality. This is admirable for toilet and buffet covers. It is cut scarf fashion and is worked with linen or cotton floss in red and blue in deep designs. This work is solid, but the cross stitches, taking in each check, show the white surface on every side, and although the work is solid the effect is light. For this canvas there is a peculiar sort of lace which finishes the edge and is also found mingled with color.

Some sofa pillows, seen at the rooms of the Decorative Art Society, may furnish hints for more skilful needlewomen. One of these is of dark blue Surah silk. The design is taken from some beautiful piece of Renaissance decoration. It consists of a floriated scroll whose stem begins almost in the centre and spreads through a beautiful series of curves with branching leaves and flowers until it is distributed all over the pillow. It is outlined with very narrow gold braid, with a chain of brown lying close alongside. In the flowers lighter browns, yellow-browns and olive browns describe the veins of the leaves and petals of the flowers, always mingling with the gilt braid. The amateur needlewoman would probably be tempted to use the braid too lavishly. It should be borne in mind that it is to be used only to emphasize the forms.

A second pillow is of light olive satin. The design, yellow roses and foliage, is in two parts and displays a certain artistic negligence, each apparently having strayed over on to the pillow from some other source.

The foliage is worked in olive silks beautifully shaded and outlined with couchings of fine gold thread. The flowers are in yellow brown silks, not too realistically drawn, and have likewise each petal outlined with the gold thread. The color scheme, beginning with the olive surface and extending through the browns into yellow, is very pleasing.

On the northeastern coast, at Mount Desert for instance, where several yards of plush even in midsummer might not be an unwelcome covering, a piano-cover in the following style might be undertaken. Certainly no summer's work could be more satisfactorily regarded. It is made of two widths of crimson plush. The ornamentation consists of set figures which must be described with some detail. These are each formed by radiations from a common centre. The radii take curved forms with small branches, each different but preserving proper proportions.

These disks, for thus they can be called, are at least seven inches in diameter. The centre is solid, an inch in diameter, with a spangle in the centre of the wool. The branching forms are made with couchings of double zephyr or several strands of wool, and each is terminated with an arrow-like point of several long graduated stitches of silk of the same color with a spangle at the end. Each disk is of a different color, ranging from red to deep olive green, and generally there are two disks of different shades of the same color. These are irregularly placed, but are ingeniously balanced.

Something may be said here of the work apron. The pongee aprons with the turned-up edge making pockets have been heretofore described. A new decoration for them is a design of branches of cherry with deep red fruit. The leaves are done in outline stitch, but the fruit is in solid Kensington stitch in two shades of red, and makes the apron a very bewitching part of the worker's costume. Other aprons have the pockets put on higher by drawing threads and adding a strip across fastening it on with the drawn work. In this case the pocket is embroidered, with clover blossoms, for instance, and another band of embroidery ornaments the lower space.

M. G. H.



COURT MANTLE OF YELLOW AND CRIMSON SILK.

EMBROIDERED WITH GOLD AND SILVER. IN THE DAVILLIER COLLECTION.

almost transforming the surface, although sparingly used, no attempt being made to cover the design. This design was inclosed in a square border of which the outer edge was made by couching a fancy brown cord. Inside of this the design was made in feather-stitch of blue, red, green, and gold, a simple yet showy means of ornamentation. Fancy cords may often be thus applied to good purpose, as they give a rich and substantial finish to a border.

No prettier work for the sultry dogdays, when even the grasshopper becomes a burden, can be suggested than the sheer linen canvas tidies, wrought in feather-stitch. These are wreathed about with daisies. By these must be understood flowers of faint pink, blue, red, or green, with petals of filoselle made as in the regulation daisy, and centres of yellow filoselle in French knot-stitch. These are connected by light vines done in feather-stitch and in every shade of green, lightness and variety being their charm. For this purpose the silks shaded in the skein should be used, as the constant variation necessary is too great for deliberate intention. The work in itself is a mere trifle in the hand, but nothing more quickly repays in beauty the slightest exertion on the part of the needlewoman.